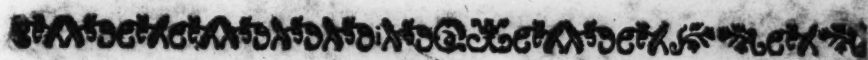


Shad. M. Harris, given
W. Cummings of Westford.
May 10. 1790



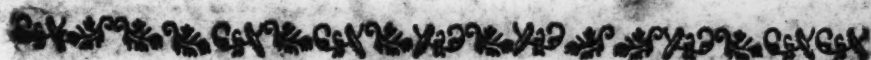
MR. ADAMS'S
SERMON.

PREACHED

AT

WESTFORD,

JANUARY 2d, 1782.



THE BRITISH MUSEUM

MR. A. D. M.

S. E. R. I. O. N.

1877

1877



THE BRITISH MUSEUM

A
S E R M O N,
O N
T H E D U T Y A N D I M P O R T A N C E
O F
M I N I S T E R S M A K I N G
T H E

S A C R E D S C R I P T U R E S t h e R U L E a n d S T A N D A R D
O f t h e i r P R E A C H I N G,

D E L I V E R E D A T

W E S T F O R D, J A N U A R Y 2 d, 1782.

In p r e s e n c e o f t h e P A S T O R S a n d D E A C O N S o f
s e v e r a l o f t h e n e i g h b o u r i n g C H U R C H E S, w h o w e r e
c o n v e n e d, i n o r d e r t o c o n f e r w i t h t h e R e v e r e n d M r.
S C R I B N E R, r e l a t i v e t o c e r t a i n D O C T R I N E S.
h e h a d b e e n c h a r g e d w i t h p r e a c h i n g.

By *Z A B D I E L A D A M S*, A. M.

P A S T O R o f t h e C H U R C H i n
L U N E N B U R G H.

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M. DCC. LXXXII.

ST. E. R. I. O. N.





ISAI A H viii. 20.

To the Law and to the Testimony: If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.

HAPPY are the people who live where divine revelation shines. This is not the portion of all the nations of the earth; *Israel* of old was thus favoured. "GOD shewed his word unto *Jacob*, his statutes and his judgments unto *Israel*: He hath not dealt so with any nations, and as for his judgments they have not known them^(a)". Since the Psalmist thus expressed himself, GOD has been pleased to make a clearer and more explicit revelation of his will, contained in what is called the New Testament, this revelation we enjoy together with that which was anciently given to the *Jews*. But whilst this is our happy state, a great part of the world still lies in darkness, they have nothing but the light of nature to direct them, they "set in the region and shadow of death^(b)," they grope in the dark, they "seek the LORD, by the dim taper of reason, if haply they might feel after him and find him^(c)". Whilst this is the sad condition of many of the nations around us, we have the blessedness of "the people that know the joyful sound^(d)". The sovereignty of GOD is to be adored in the discrimination that he has made among the nations of the earth; and greatly is he to be praised that he has so highly favoured us above many people, who by nature were equal, and perhaps on other accounts superior to ourselves. Well may we adopt the words of our blessed Saviour and say, "we thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast

(a) *Psa*. CXLvi. 19--20. (b) *Matth* iv. 16. (c) *Act* xvii. 27.
(d) *Psa*. lxxxix 15.

hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to us babes. Even so Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight (e)." This revelation thus granted to us, is transmitted down in writing. Now all writing is in a greater or less degree uncertain. This is especially true of all ancient compositions. Obscurity is produced by length of time. An additional happiness, therefore, do we enjoy in having an order of men, divinely appointed, to explain, as well as to inculcate and enforce, this *word* and *will* of God. The ignorance of a very considerable part of mankind, and the ambiguity of all kinds of writing being properly considered, it must appear a mighty privilege to have a set of men, whose *leisure* and *education* shall enable them, in some degree, to unfold the doctrinal truths of this written revelation. Were multitudes upon reading the *scriptures*, to be asked, as Phillip of old asked the Eunuch, "understandest thou what thou readest?" they like him must answer, "how can I except some man guide me (f)!" Though the Old and New Testament be, in the most important parts thereof, sufficiently intelligible, yet there are not only in St. Paul's epistles, but in other books of scripture, "some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstable are liable to wrest to their own destruction (g)." The wisdom, and goodness of God, therefore, are most devoutly to be acknowledged in the institution of the gospel ministry. But alas! the best appointments are liable to be corrupted. Ministers, whose sole business it is to explain and enforce the doctrines of scripture, sometimes grossly misrepresent them. When this is the case, lamentable is the condition of those people who set under them. If the "leaders of the people cause them to err, those that are led of them will be destroyed (h)." If "they whose lips should preserve knowledge, and at whose mouths the people should seek the law, are ignorant or erroneous," then the "blind lead the blind and both will fall into the ditch." The light should be in the head, "but if the light that is therein be darkness, how great is that darkness (i)?" The prophet Isaiah, conscious of these things, calls

(e) *Mat.* xi. 25.(f) *Act.* viii. 30.(g) *2. Pet.* iii. 16.(h) *Isaiah* ix. 16.(i) *Matth.* vi. 23.

calls upon all that pretended to speak in the name of the LORD to have recourse notto *familiar spirits and wizards that peep and mutter, but to the law and the testimony, and declared that if they speak not according to that word, it was because there was no light in them.* From the words thus introduced I shall attempt the following things.

I. That it is the duty of the ministers of religion to preach and speak both *publickly* and *privately* agreeably to the scriptures of truth.

II. Shew that sometimes they depart therefrom, and particularly point out when they may be said to do so.

III. Mention some of the reasons why ministers do not always speak agreeably to the divine law and testimony. And then conclude with a suitable application.

As to the first of these particulars, a few words will suffice. We all agree that "ministers are in some peculiar sense put in trust with the people, and are stewards of the mysteries of GOD." It is acknowledged very generally, that as the canon of scripture is completed; so visions, inspirations, prophecies and miracles have ceased. Ministers have at this day no such extraordinary powers as they were vested with, in the days of the Apostles; so that if there were need of a new revelation, or an addition to the old one, there are no persons capacitated to undertake the mighty task. But there is no such necessity. The scripture is full and complete. When the revelation of *John* the divine on the island of PATMOS ended, the canon of scripture was closed, and a curse denounced against the presumptuous wretch "that should dare to add to or diminish therefrom; his part should be taken away from the book of life." Since therefore no addition is to be made to divine revelation, the *stewards of the mysteries of GOD* have nothing else to do, than explain and inculcate *that* which we now enjoy. They are not to make a new, but rationally to interpret the bible we at present possess. They are to come to their people, with a "thus saith the LORD;" and no further are they to be regarded, then as they speak according to the *Law and Testimony*. These should not only be the foundation of their preaching, but frequent recurrence should be made thereto; and all their discourses, on topicks dubious and disputable

disputable should ever be vindicated and supported by passages of revelation, consistently interpreted. As the scriptures are a complete rule of faith and practice, so no knowledge more than what is contained in them, is necessary to salvation. Other knowledge indeed is convenient and ornamental, and studiously to be sought after; but it is no further useful to the gospel ministers than as it is a *hand-maid* to divinity, and serves to illucidate the dark and intricate parts of revelation. It is highly necessary for this purpose; and the most learned divine is qualified, and (other things being equal) will be, the best minister. But if his extensive knowledge leads him astray (as it must be confessed it sometimes does) by indulging to speculations of his own, and hearkening to the vagaries of a conceited mind, then in all important points, it may be said that there is no light in him; none that conduces to the salvation of his hearers, none that will be profitable to himself, in *the great day of the LORD*. These observations, showing it to be the duty of public teachers, to make the scriptures the rule and measure of their preaching, we find confirmed not only by my text, but also by the *express and direct assertion* of St. Peter, who says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of *GOD* (*k*)", since in the sacred scriptures we have "a sure word of prophecy, and are persuaded that we have not followed cunningly devised fables, certainly we should do well to take heed thereunto," not only make them the men of our counsel, but the rule of our preaching. But though from scripture, and the reason of the thing, it is sufficiently evident that ministers are obligated to represent to their hearers only the truths and doctrines of divine revelation; yet some persons fail of this design, and that in so great a degree as to render them unsafe and dangerous to be believed or followed. Of this I proposed to speak in the second head of my discourse. And here to prevent mistakes, let it be observed, that among all the teachers of religion, none are to be found, who without error or mistake, are capable perfectly to expound the law and will of *GOD*; neither are *any two* ever to be met with, who always

(k) 1. Pet. iv. 11.

ways, in all points agree in the explanation of it. This is not to be expected. The lot of humanity will not permit it : There are some things, even in scripture, of which we must be contentedly ignorant, till we drop this mortal flesh, and arrive at the world of perfect vision. This ignorance and imperfection of ministers does not destroy the utility of their office. Neither are we to throw away any man, who as a public teacher, does not explain and interpret every passage or doctrine of scripture, according to our own sentiments. A man is not to be *made an offender for a word*. Allowances are to be made for the frailties of human nature. Freedom of enquiry is to be indulged ; and great candour is to be exercised, by the people, towards their ministers. We are not hastily to conclude, that a preacher is dangerously erroneous, because all his sentiments do not co-incide with our pre-conceived opinion.

Though, the exact knowledge of all parts of scripture would be highly pleasing to the inquisitive mind ; yet mistakes in many parts thereof, are consistent with a state of salvation. The future happiness of our souls will not be prevented thereby. If an exact knowledge of divine revelation, in all its parts, were necessary to salvation, who then could be saved ? All the important doctrines of scripture are so plainly revealed, that good men are generally agreed in them. Differences among ministers are oftentimes merely verbal ; and (if they are otherwise) their difference is *mostly* about the more intricate and less important matters of revelation. But then, sometimes it so happens that they widely and essentially differ ; differ in matters highly important, by which the salvation of their own, and their hearers souls may be greatly endangered ; if not finally lost.

Few ministers are ever to be found, so corrupt and erroneous, but will sometimes entertain their hearers, with the true and genuine doctrines of the gospel. The difficulty and the danger with unsound teachers is, that they intermix falsehood with truth ; and too much neglect plain, scriptural doctrines, for the sake of preaching up the fancies and figments of their own distempered brains. The *church of Rome* is doubtless the most corrupt christian

church now in the world; yet it is well known that a part of their creed is agreeable to the belief of sound protestants, and to the standard of scripture. Their error and danger lie principally in the human mixtures they have introduced, and the corrupt additions they have made to the sacred doctrines; as appears particularly from *Pope Pius's* creed. That church holds to Christ as the head; they lay him in the foundation; but they have built on this foundation a most erroneous structure of error and folly. On this foundation, they have built not only what the apostle calls "*gold, silver, precious stones*," but *wood, hay, and stubble*(1). Their doctrines of *transubstantiation*, *invocation of saints*, prayers to the *virgin Mary*; *indulgences*, prayers for the dead, *penance*, *pilgrimages*, *auricular confession*, and a hundred other absurdities, have so eaten out the vitals of christianity, or at least, have so corrupted the simplicity, obscured the glory, and veiled the beauty of the gospel, as to make that communion an extremely dangerous one; and such as we ought never to enter, even though we have no right to say that salvation cannot be had therein. This last superstructure, being composed of combustible materials, as *wood, hay, stubble*, will be burnt up; and the builders will suffer loss, but themselves may be saved; yet so, as by fire, that is with difficulty and narrowly, as goods are saved out of an house all in flames over our heads. The church of the Jews in the days of our Saviour, acted much the same part: They departed from the *law and testimony*. They *transgressed the commandments of G O D*, and in many instances made them of no effect *by their traditions*, as our blessed L O R D said, and made evident. Their partial representations, corrupt comments and glosses, enervated the scriptures, and tended to mislead their hearers, and cause them to expect salvation in a way in which it was not to be found. Leaving the simplicity of the law, "they taught for doctrines the commandments of men (m)". And as "the leaders of G O D's people anciently caused them to err," so it is no breach of charity to assert that this is sometimes the case at

(1) 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13.

(m) Mat. xv. 9.

the present day. There are those among us who pervert the gospel of CHRIST, who corrupt the word of GOD, and, even, in some instances, represent things so differently from the truth as it is in JESUS, that they may be said to preach another gospel." If sometimes they entertain their hearers with the *doctrines* of *grace* clearly, and *strikingly* represented, it nobly prepares their minds for the reception of their poisonous errors, and greatly facilitates the entrance of pernicious falsehoods into them. In such a case as this, the preacher, (if allowed to be erroneous at all) is supposed by many to err on the right side; that it is only an excess of orthodoxy, that he has a good design, means to exalt the divine sovereignty; and if he speaks wickedly, does it for GOD." But however the errors of such kind of teachers may be palliated and excused by a particular kind of hearers, yet it is much to be doubted whether they will be excused so easily at the bar of GOD. It is the duty of teachers to preach the truth, and nothing but the truth; to deliver the whole counsel of of GOD and keep back nothing that is profitable." What then shall we think of the man who occasionally only preaches the genuine doctrines of the gospel, whilst the most of his time and zeal are expended in bringing into view a sort of theology produced by the conjunctions of pride and metaphisic; as, one expresses it, a kind of Divinity "spun, as the spider does his web, out of his own bowels." These things being observed in general, I would now particularly say, that a teacher of religion goes counter to the directions of my text, when he preaches things concerning which the bible is totally silent. This at once will exclude from the pulpit all discourses of *philosophy*, astronomy, metaphisics, &c. For the scriptures were never designed to teach us any of the above sciences.

Again, the text is contradicted when a minister confines his time in the pulpit in endeavors to explain matters that are too wonderful for him; mysteries that are high and sublime; to which he cannot attain; and on which it is impossible for him to throw any degree of light. The introducing the *fine spun distinctions* and *curious explications* of the *schools* into discourses of divinity, has darkened rather than illustrated the doctrines of scripture. Revelation has been adulterated, and it's benevolent

lent purpose in some degree, obstructed by this method of procedure. How vain are all attempts to explain the manner of CHRIST's conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary, by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. How idle and futile are all pretended explanations concerning the modes of the union between the two natures of Christ, commonly called the hypostatic union? Who is able to declare CHRIST's eternal generation; who can clearly and intelligibly shew how he was the Son of GOD, and how the son of man? how the spirit operates upon the hearts of men, and how he originally proceeded from the Father and the Son? and what is the unity of the divine persons, and what their difference? Those doctrines cannot be enlightened by any disquisitions of human reason. We believe them upon the authority of divine revelation and know no more about them, than that reveals. Nay, if the spirit of GOD had descended to a particular explanation of these mysterious matters, we could not have comprehended his meaning, or gained any light, unless our minds had been enlarged. But this we know, that it was not the manner of our Saviour and his apostles to enter into any explanation of these incomprehensible things, the scripture passes them over in profound silence; and so ought they who undertake to be the public dispensers of it. That this is extending our enquiries to a latitude beyond what the bible will justify, might be illustrated by a multitude of instances; but to prevent being tedious, I shall select only a few. And to go on; what avail all the distinctions *divines* have sometimes made concerning the nature of *grace*, whether it differs in kind or degree, be *special* or *common*, influence the mind in one way or another? So long as we know that GOD will assist us, if we endeavour to serve him; and never wants means to effect his designs? Of what advantage are heated controversies concerning the abilities of unregenerate men? so long as we may rest assured that they are commanded to love and obey GOD, and that GOD does not command impossibilities, but his command makes it our duty to do what we can, and his grace will be perfect in our weakness.

That GOD is omniscient, all agree; that all future events, even such as are called contingent, are known by him

him; long before they take place, is not disputed. The preacher, who, not content with affirming that this perfection belongs to G O D, undertakes to explain how the prescience of the Deity does, or does not consist with the liberty of man, is wise above what is written, and oftentimes "*darkens counsel by words without knowledge.*" And if the result of his speculations on this head, should be, that man is not a free agent in the common acceptation of the words, that his will is fast bound in fate; that he has not a principle of efficiency, by which to determine his own volitions and actions, but like a machine is operated upon; that all his liberty consists merely in voluntariness and is by no means to be opposed to necessity, I say if the result of his reasonings on the divine omniscience, should be such as is represented above (nearly as has been in fact the case) then he departs from the *law* and *testimony* in a still higher and more important sense. In this case he not only speaks where the scripture is silent; but really contradicts it in a point that is highly essential. He advances an antisciptural doctrine, repugnant to the common sense, reason and perception of mankind; and consequently highly improper to be preached. For though several people, and some very wicked ones too, have taught the doctrine of fate and necessity; and some of them evidently with a design to subvert all religion, and even the being of G O D; yet nothing can be plainer than that the revelation of G O D to man, uniformly considers him as *free*, and addresses him from the beginning of *Genesis* to the end of the *Apocalypse*, accordingly (n).

Upon

(n) Though it is somewhat contrary to my present design to enter into any reasoning on this point, yet as it is a matter that has employed the thoughts and pens of many writers, I will beg leave just to give the sentiments of the great and learned Dr. SAMUEL CLARKE, on it, speaking of God's knowledge extending to the most contingent futurities, even the actions of free agents, he says, "There is in this matter one difficulty which has in all ages employed the speculations of considering men; namely, how foreknowledge in God, can be consistent with liberty of action in men." In answer to which, he says, "1st. That our finite understanding may reasonably be allowed, not to be able to comprehend all the ways

Upon the contrary supposition; the commands and exhortations of scripture are perfectly nugatory; or insulting. Again, that GOD, when he placed Adam on trial in the garden of Eden, and interdicted him the fruit of the tree of knowledge, knew that he would fall, and had power sufficient to prevent it, no man disputes; but to reason from thence as some have done, that GOD chose he should eat of that tree, or transgress; that it was a part of GOD's general scheme of Providence that he should do so, that sin was necessary for the good of the system; and that this accounts for the introduction of it into the world, to reason, I say, in this manner, and to advance such sentiments, is not only a departure from, but a gross contradiction to Scripture. By such assertions, though made to be thought wiser than other people, they darken and debase the divine character; make GOD to say one thing and at the same time

ways of infinite knowledge; Job xi. 7. "Can'st thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? &c. This acknowledgement of the incomprehensibility of the ways of God must always be understood with relation to such things only as do not imply any express contradiction.---Also, it must be observed, that this acknowledgement ought to be understood *only* of things, expressly revealed, not of any human doctrines. 2dly, It is further necessary to premise that in the matter before us, the question is not, whether men's actions be free; but whether or no, and how, that freedom of action which makes men to be men, can be consistent with the foreknowledge of such actions: for if these two things were really inconsistent, and could by no means be reconciled; it would follow, not that men's actions were not free; (for that would destroy all religion, and take away all the moral attributes of God at once;) but on the other side, it would follow, that such free actions as men's are, and without which rational creatures could not be rational creatures, were not the objects of the divine foreknowledge. And in such case, it would be no more a diminution of God's omniscience, not to know things impossible and contradictory to be known; than it is a diminution of his omnipotence, not to be able to do things impossible and contradictory to be done: But this is not the case: For these two things being premised we may now answer directly to the difficulty itself, namely, how foreknowledge in God can be consistent with liberty of action in men; and they are therefore consistent, because foreknowledge has no influence at all upon

the

time, to mean another, to chuse what he forbids; and in some respects, to be pleased with what he tells us is, "*the abominable thing which his soul hates.*" It makes the perceptive and decretive, or the secret and revealed will of GOD opposite to each other. That the fall of Adam, has been so over-ruled by the *Great Supreme* whose wonderful prerogative it is to educe good from ill) as to benefit the rational system, and illustrate his own perfections, no rational man will deny. But to assert, that he fell in consequence of a divine appointment or efficiency, is what no mortal has a right to do! How much better is it to think with the *Assembly of Divines at Westminster*, and say, "man being left to the freedom of his own will, fell from the estate wherein he was created, by sinning against GOD." How a contrary sentiment, such as I just now represented, which seems to tarnish the glory of the divine truth

the things foreknown; and it has therefore no influence upon them, because things would be just as they are, and not otherwise, if there was no foreknowledge. Foreknowledge does not cause things to be; but things that are to be hereafter, whether necessarily or freely, are the cause of it's being foreknown that they should so be, whether necessarily or freely. The futurity of free actions is exactly the same, and in the nature of things themselves, as the like certainty in event, whether they *can* or *could not* be foreknown. As our knowing a thing to be, when we see it is, does not hinder an action from being free, notwithstanding it is then certain, and cannot but be, when it is: So God's foreknowing that any action will freely be done, does not at all hinder its being free, though he knows it certainly; because his foreseeing things to come, does no more influence, or alter the nature of things, than our seeing them when they are.---The manner of God's knowing future free actions, must not indeed be, like his foreknowledge of things necessary. I say, it must not be by foreseeing a continued chain of causes: For that would indeed destroy their freedom. But it must be a power, quite of another kind: a power, whereof we can only have an obscure glimpse in some such manner as the following. What one man will freely do, upon any particular occasion, another man, by observation and attention, may in some measure judge; and the wiser the person is, who makes the observation, the more probable will his judgment be, and the seldomer will he be deceived. An angel, in the like case, would make a judgment of the future event, as much nearer to certainty, than that

of

truth and justice ; which so glaringly contradicts the express words of Scripture, can be thought a reasonable and safe one, it is impossible for me to say. Can it be thought reasonable to fix on the great *Judge of heaven and earth*, a character, that would be disgraceful to any of our fellow men. Is it decent to set aside plain and repeated declarations of scripture, to make room for our fallacious and precarious reasoning ? Vain man would be wise, and he be born like the wild asses colt". Who can readily believe with such kind of teachers, that G O D from all eternity determined to damn the greater part of mankind, or at least, a very considerable number of them, to promote his own glory, and to exalt or increase the happiness of the remainder, when he remembers that the scripture repeatedly and plainly declares, " that G O D will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (o)".

" that

of the wisest man, as the angelic nature and faculties are superior to the human. In God himself, whose powers are all in every respect infinitely transcending those of the highest creatures ; this judgment of future free actions, must needs be infallible, that is, as truly certain (though entirely of a different kind) as that foreknowledge which he has of necessary events, by seeing their necessary chain of causes : Nor ought it to appear strange, that this divine foreknowledge of future free actions, should be entirely of a different nature, from his foreknowledge of necessary events. For there is a not unlike distinction in some other of the divine attributes.----- The omnipresence of G O D, is an attribute necessarily belonging to him, and altogether independent of his will. The goodness of G O D is likewise a necessary attribute, yet not in the same manner as his omnipresence, by a mere absolute necessity of nature, but by the unalterable rectitude of his will. This is the true reason why we return him thanks for being *good*, but not for being omnipresent. Thus both are necessary, but by a necessity of a totally different sort or kind. In like manner, the foreknowledge of G O D, both that of necessary, and that of free events, is in the issue of things equally certain ; yet in the one case, this certainty is entirely of a different nature from that in the other. It arises in the case of necessary events from G O D's own fore-appointing a necessary chain of causes to produce these events ; but in the case of *free* events it arises *from* and depends *upon* the mere futurity of the things themselves.

To

“ that he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (p)”. Again, “ as I live faith the LORD, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die(q)”. “ O that there were such an heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and their children after them (r)”. “ O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end (s)”. “ How shall I give thee up, *Ephraim* ? How shall I deliver thee, *Israel* ? How shall I make thee as *Admah* ? How shall I set thee as *Zebium* ? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together (t)”. “ O *Jerusalem, Jerusalem*, thou that stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thee, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not (u)”. What can be the meaning of these numerous texts, if G O D originally and unconditionally determined the final destruction of multitudes of mankind ? In short, for ministers to pretend to dive into the secret counsels of G O D, as though they had of old been his counsellors, to the detriment of his revelation,

To illustrate this matter by an example. That CHRIST, should die for the sins of men, G O D not only fore-knew but fore-appointed it also, and sent him into the world on purpose for that end. That Judas should betray our Savior, G O D foreknew, but did not fore-appoint it ; only he chose on purpose, into the number of his disciples, one such person, the wickedness of whose own heart, he *saw* would prompt him to accomplish that event. That Ahab should fall at Ramath-Gilead, G O D foresaw, and fore-warned him of it ; yet G O D's fore-knowledge did not make it necessary for him, to go up and perish there ; but the mere wickedness of his own will, despising the divine admonition, as it was the only cause of the event, so was it likewise the only ground of the fore-knowledge. And had Ahab been disposed to repent at the advice of the Prophet, it was in his own power to have prevented his destruction ; and the fore-knowledge of God, would then have been accordingly the fore-knowledge of a contrary event.” The reader will pardon the length of the extract, when he considers that it could not have been shortened without doing injustice to the reasoning of the Author.

(p) *Peter* iii. 9. (q) *Ezekiel* xxxiii. 11. (r) *Deut* v. 29.
 (s) *Deut* v. 29. (t) *Hosea* xi. 8. (u) *Mat.* xxiii. 37.

tion, which tells us that, "secret things belong unto the LORD our GOD, but things only that are revealed to us and to our children, that we might do all the words of his law (w)", for them to attempt to explain mysteries, which the scripture chose to pass over in eternal silence, to substitute their scholastic niceties, in the room of the plain and weighty matters of the law, is to contradict the direction of my text, and is a practice at once too notorious to be dissembled, and too dangerous to be excused ! To sum up the whole under this head, let us hear what the great apostle of the gentiles thought of such kind of preaching. He resolves for himself, that he would "preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, not in the words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power ; that the faith of his hearers might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of GOD (x)". Accordingly, he cautions the christian Colossians, against the dangerous practice of those who corrupted the simplicity of GOD's word, by their sophistical reasonings : "Beware, says he, least any man spoil you, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after CHRIST (y)". Finally, he directs *Timothy*, and *Titus*, to guard with care against so dangerous a method of preaching. To *Timothy* he says, "refuse profane and old wives fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness (z)".

Again, "shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness (a)". Foolishness and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes (b)". Lastly, "if any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the doctrine that is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disquieting of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth ; *from such withdraw thyself (c)*". I shall now in the third place enquire into the reasons why ministers sometimes do not preach

(w) *Deut.* xxix. 29. (x) *Cor.* ii. 2, 4, 5. (y) *Col.* ii. 8.

(z) 1. *Tim.* iv. 7. (a) 2. *Tim.* ii. 16. (b) 2. *Tim.* ii. 23.

(c) 1. *Tim.* vi. 3, 4, 5.

preach according to the *law* and *testimony*. It might be answered in general, that *ignorance, inattention, and the corrupt principles of the human heart* lead them astray. But I shall be more particular, and answer first, some persons misrepresent the doctrines of revelation, through design, in order to accommodate themselves to the corrupt humours of their hearers. Such is the abandoned temper of some teachers, that they will *knowingly* pervert the gospel, that they may answer some wicked design, or secure to themselves some worldly emolument. Persons that will thus conduct, are hereticks in the strictest sense of the word. They are highly criminal in the sight of G O D. To reason with such men is vain ; though it may be proper to administer to them, an wholesome admonition or two. Hence says St. Paul, “ an heretick after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such, is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself *d)*”. Charity obliges us to think there are but few such ministers at this day. Secondly, another reason why publick teachers misrepresent the truth, is their negligence in studying the scriptures. As the husbandman cannot cultivate his farm without proper utensils ; so neither is the preacher properly furnished for his work, unless much acquainted with the sacred *code*, which is the foundation of the whole of his instructions from the pulpit. In order to his having this acquaintance, much study is necessary. But as “ study is a weariness to the flesh *e)*,” some teachers content themselves with a careless and cursory reading the scriptures, which is by no means sufficient to give us a clear and comprehensive knowledge of them. Assiduous application is requisite for this purpose. Different passages should be compared with each other ; the analogy of faith must be preserved, a harmony maintained through the whole, and dark texts explained by those that are more clear and intelligible. But alas ! for want of this attention, how horribly are the scriptures sometimes perverted. The preacher is carried away by mere sounds ; and strains texts to such unnatural senses, as are not only contrary to the general scope of revelation, but strike at the foundation of all religion. Through neglect of comparing one passage

(d) *Tit.* iii. 10. (e) *Ecc.* xii. 12.

sage with another ; by reason of not attending to the general design of the writer, the connexion of his discourse, and the thread of his reasoning, we raise doctrines upon incidental looseportions of scripture, which contradict it's general tenor, and countenance immorality. The mistake occasioned hereby, might be made evident by a variety of instances : I will mention a few. " Whatsoever is not of faith is sin (*f*)". How often has this text been quoted to prove that whatever an unregenerate man does in religion, is altogether sin, because he is destitute of true saving faith in CHRIST ? But if we carefully consult the context, will it not clearly appear, that it has no kind of reference to this matter ? On the contrary, from such an examination, will it not be abundantly evident, that the reasoning of St. Paul was only this, that with respect to a controversy that subsisted between the *judaizing* and *gentile* christians, concerning the lawfulness of observing, or not observing certain days, or of eating or not eating certain meats, they ought to be fully persuaded in their own minds, and not go contrary to the belief of them ; for though it was lawful under the gospel, to eat all kinds of wholesome meats ; yet if any man thought otherwise, or even doubted the lawfulness of particular kinds of meat, and yet eat of them. he acted a sinful part, in going contrary to the light of his own mind. He that doubteth is damned, that is, condemned in his own mind, if he eat, because he eateth not of faith ; for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.

Again, " whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it (*g*). " Has not this passage also been greatly misrepresented ; either to serve a particular favorite scheme, or through neglect to consult the drift of our Saviour, in the chapter where he uses it. Multitudes are sensible, that it has been often used in support of this singular opinion, viz. that if a man has any desire to secure his own salvation by any acts of obedience he performs ; nay, if he is not willing to forego his final happiness, for the glory of GOD, and of CHRIST, he certainly shall be damned ! And yet, is it not sufficiently evident from the connexion in which it stands,

stands, that it means neither more nor less than this, that if a man through fear of temporal death, would renounce CHRIST and his gospel, though by this means he might save his temporal, he should certainly lose his eternal life? I might easily point out the perversion of many other passages of sacred writ, that have been misconstrued, either through inattention, or to serve a particular turn; but the time would fail me. I shall only observe, that it cannot give us a very favorable opinion of sentiments, or doctrines, that have no other support in the bible than such texts, thus grossly misapplied. Thirdly, Another reason why we do not speak as the oracles of GOD, is that we come to the study of them with prejudiced minds. This is a disadvantage we all, in a greater or less degree, labour under. A man totally free from prejudice, is no where to be found. There are certain principles in the human heart, which imperceptibly lead us astray. We are always liable to be unduly biased; but when young, prepossessions are most apt to take place. The company we keep, the books we read in our juvenile years make a strong impression, and sometimes shackle the mind in such a manner, that it is with difficulty we get rid of the bias so long as we live. We are formed for imitation; and whilst incapable of judging for ourselves, we take our sentiments from those, whom from their stations, and characters we are led to reverence. With sentiments thus previously imbibed, we come to the study of the scriptures. Therefore instead of enquiring impartially into the true meaning of them, with an upright desire to be acquainted with it, our business is rather to make them an echo to our own voice, and accommodate them in the best manner we can to our pre-conceived sentiments. Passages of revelation are hence tortured, wrested from their original design, and made to speak a language foreign from the intention of the writer.

Under this head of prejudice and the evil influence it has upon us, I shall mention two particulars. First, Some men from this cause are unduly fond of the sentiments of the ancients, and will not be induced to believe any thing, on which *they* had not put the *stamp* of *orthodoxy*. These people have an undue reverence for antiquity.

quity. "They believe that the former times were better than these^(b)" ; and particularly that our forefathers were the best and most perfect models ; that their examples were a transcript of the precepts, and their belief of the doctrines of the gospel. Though I have no disposition to disparage them in either of these respects ; yet without offence I may be allowed to say, they were not perfect ; and he that shall implicitly follow them either in their faith or practice, is in danger of being misled. We ought to see with our own eyes, and search for truth not in their fallible writings, but in the unerring pages of divine inspiration. "We should call no man master, or father on earth ; since one is our master even CHRIST ⁽ⁱ⁾". Happy indeed are we in having the opinions of our fathers delivered down to us in *creeds* and *formularies*, provided we make a discreet use of them ; but if they are subscribed, and rigidly adhered to, as the standard of right opinion, they are then an insuperable bar to any improvement in divine knowledge. We do well to avail ourselves of the writings and discoveries of former times ; but ought not to rest contented with any attainments to which they had arrived. Modern improvements have been made in philosophy, jurisprudence, &c. why not in divinity ? There was a contrariety of sentiments even among the ancients ; we ought to read both sides of the controversy ; and from their interferences, as from the collision of the flint and steel, should labour to strike out new light. In short, a blind attachment to mere human creeds, hangs a dead weight upon the mind, fetters the native freedom of the soul, prevents our impartial enquiries, and oftentimes greatly misleads. But, Secondly, Prejudice, in some persons has a quite contrary effect, and leads on the other hand, as far from the truth of scripture. This is the case of those who would be thought more penetrating and sagacious than other people. Such persons take no satisfaction in preaching that which others have preached before them. Their pride can content itself with nothing but what is *new* and *singular*. Thread bare truth

(b) Ecc. vii. 10.

(i) Mat. xxiii. 8.

truth they hate. New and untrodden paths *only* can they brook to walk in. They love to set the world a staring by the novelty and strangeness of their assertions. They love to be talked of, as men above vulgar prejudices, who act an independent part, and who think for themselves. To be transmitted down to posterity, as the heads of a new *sect* in religion, is an object so tempting to their vanity that they cannot resist it. Now to answer these purposes, to gratify their vanity, and to be thought wiser than others, it is necessary to strike out new walks of science, to broach new doctrines, and contradict the opinions of those who have gone before them. If they think and preach like those who went before them, what glory is it? But if they are the authors of new discoveries; if they can unravel the *Gordian knot*; if they can account for the introduction of sin into the world, and explain *that* which has puzzled the brightest geniusses in former ages, then they answer their design, they glory in their new invented divinity; and pertinaciously adhere to *that* which shocks the common sense of mankind in general. To show that mankind have been in an error, even in the smallest matter, and to point out their mistake, is some gratification to their vanity; but to prove that they have been in a mistake in *religion*, which is a matter of universal concern, for eighteen hundred years past, affords to them matter of exultation and triumph! From such a source as this, some persons of vain and empty minds, deviate from the scripture, and teach for doctrines not the truths of revelation, but the dictates of their own vanity and pride.—*Fourthly, and lastly.* The last reason I shall mention, why ministers depart from the *law* and the *testimony* is, their not settling before-hand just sentiments of the *Deity*. Did we conceive of him, as we ought, as a being of *truth* and *justice*, of *holiness* and infinite *benevolence*, we could not possibly believe that a revelation from him, could contain such doctrines, as are sometimes preached. Under the notion of exalting his sovereignty, we should by no means represent him as cruel and tyrannical, merciless and capricious. Whether this has not been done by some, I leave others to judge.

I shall

I shall apply the whole that has been said, to the ministers now present, and to the people who hear them. First, to the ministers. You will permit me, my reverend Fathers and Brethren, to observe that it becomes us to be very careful how we study the holy scriptures : with what tempers we come to the study of them. There are many principles in the human heart that may lead us insensibly to wrest and pervert the sacred oracles. We should, therefore, watch over our own hearts, mortify our pride, our vanity, and every other passion that makes us averse to the truth, as it is in JESUS. The prevailing temper of the heart has an amazing influence on the sentiments of the head. Thus the pride of the heart is brought with difficulty to submit to some of the humbling doctrines of the gospel. How hard is it to consent to receive salvation as the free gift of GOD ? Again, a man of a selfish temper greatly devoid of benevolence, after having placed himself in the number of the elect, readily adopts the groundless doctrine of personal, unconditional reprobation ; and contemplates with pleasure the inevitable damnation of millions of his fellow men ; and so in an hundred other instances. It becomes us therefore, as public teachers of religion to exercise a godly jealousy over ourselves, and labour to bring with us to the study of the scriptures, an *open, candid, meek and teachable* temper. “ The meek GOD will guide in judgment, the meek he will teach his way(*k*)”. A disposition to do the will of GOD is the best preparative for the right understanding the doctrines of christianity. CHRIST says, if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of GOD, or whether I speak of myself (*l*). Accordingly says Daniel, “ none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand(*m*)”. The predominancy of lust and passion shuts up the avenues of the soul, and bars the entrance of divine truth ; it warps and distorts the mind, and leads to gross misconceptions. As we cannot but be sensible of this, it should be our constant endeavour to mortify the evil propensities of our hearts, and with meekness receive and dispense the ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls”. It should,

moreover,

(*k*) *Psal.* xxv. 9. (*l*) *J:hn* vii. 17. (*m*) *Dan.* xxii. 10.

moreover, be our great concern to divest our minds of all prejudicate opinions, not first settle our sentiments and then examine, as is too often the case; but examine with impartiality and care, in order to our being grounded and established in the faith. And in this examination let us make the Bible the standard, receiving that more than the most respectable human authority; being persuaded that the first is unerring; the last fallible and precarious. Finally, we should add our fervent addresses to the GOD of all grace for the illumination and guidance of his Holy Spirit, that we may be preserved from all dangerous errors, may know the truth ourselves, and be faithful dispensers of it to others; for truly dreadful is it to mislead, either through ignorance or passion, those *who seek the law at our mouths*. Against the errors of teachers there is one security, and that is, the right understanding of their hearers in divine things. An intelligent people are rarely imposed upon by false and erroneous preachers. But be this as it will, certainly people are not obliged implicitly to believe *all* that is delivered to them from the desk. They have the Bible in their hands, written in a language which they understand, and by *this* they are to judge, whether what they hear be true or not. To you therefore who hear, I shall in the Second place, apply myself. Suffer me, my brethren to say, that ministers "have no dominion over your faith, but are only helpers of your joy (*n*)". You have not only a *right*, but it is your *duty* to judge for yourselves. "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of GOD; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." It was the commendation of the *Bereans*, that they searched the scriptures *daily*, to see whether the things spoken by the apostles, were so or not. It must be equally to the praise of any other people, if they see with their own eyes, and compare the doctrines that are delivered to them from time to time, with the Bible, the only unerring standard. Implicit faith is degrading to the human mind. It argues a base and servile temper. Hence, searching the scriptures, to put us into a capacity to judge of the sentiments

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that are advanced to us by our teachers, is a mark of a noble and ingenuous soul, that will not be hood-winked or shackled by authority. I say not this to excite a *carping, captious* spirit in hearers, of which there is full enough at present; but only to influence to a *rational, diligent* and *manly* examination of the word of G O D; and to enable them to see when the spirit of the gospel is preached, or contradicted by their ministers. To enable you to make this examination to any valuable purpose, several things are necessary. First, a good and an honest heart, disposed to keep the divine commands, will give you great insight into the will of G O D. *David* could say, I “have more understanding than all my teachers; for thy testimonies are my meditation; I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts (o)”. Secondly, It will be a mighty help to you in the understanding of scripture in the dark and mysterious parts thereof, to settle and entertain in your minds right conceptions of the divine character. Thirdly, Remember that revelation was given not to introduce speculative and curious opinions into the world, but to rectify the disorders, and better the temper of the human heart. Fourthly, Lay it down as a maxim, that no doctrines can come from G O D, a being of infinite purity and holiness, which in the least degree tolerate or tend to encourage *vice* and *immorality*. Fifthly, That revelation is founded in *reason* and *common sense*, and therefore that none of its doctrines can contradict either the one or the other; however, some of them may be above our comprehension. *That* people who shall attentively study the scripture agreeably to the rules and directions laid down in this discourse, will be out of all danger of being carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the flight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive (p)”. I am constrained to add, that a people well acquainted with the revealed will of G O D, will not easily digest, or be reconciled to certain doctrines that have been propagated of late in *some* of our *Parishes*. The *Pastors and Deacons*, who have in this place taken much pains to become acquainted with the religious sentiments

(o) *Psal.* cxix. 99, 100. (p) *Ephes.* vi. 14.

sentiments of the Rev. Mr. SCRIBNER; are, in general fully persuaded that he has either *publicly* or *privately* advanced some sentiments, not only unsupported by scripture, but also of a dangerous nature, and tendency. In particular, they conceive that he is dangerously erroneous in the two following points. First, in what he has said concerning sin's being the object of GOD's choice, and agreeable to his will. And Secondly, in saying that the *unregenerate* have no right to attend the *means of grace*: Notwithstanding Mr. SCRIBNER'S explanations or softening of these heads, yet it finally did appear, that the sentiments he advanced, relative to the above particulars, were such, as not only could not be defended, but were really contrary to the very spirit and genius of christianity.—It must be thought a matter of the highest importance, to entertain right conceptions of the deity. We are taught to conceive of him as a being of infinite purity and holiness; but if sin, in any view of it be agreeable to him; if it was introduced into the world, by his influence, efficiency or creation, how can we reconcile this with his *justice*, purity and holiness? How can we reconcile it with his justice to punish *that* in his creatures, which they did through his efficiency, and in the execution of his own will? How, with his holiness to create, or effect, to will or choose *that* which is directly contrary to holiness? The distinctions that have been made in relation to this subject, appear to be altogether futile; such as that, *the sinfulness of sin*, and *sin in its own nature*, are displeasing to GOD. Do not these expressions imply that there is a kind of holiness, or goodness in sin; and that sin out of it's own nature, is the object of GOD's choice? To introduce such uncouth phraseology into popular sermons; to disturb the natural ideas that mankind have of GOD, to distinguish and subtilize beyond the limits of common sense, must certainly be a very unprofitable way, a very dangerous method of preaching. But it will be said, that the scripture represents GOD as encouraging and promoting sin. I must confess there are many passages which seem to countenance the very sentiment I am now exploding. Thus we read that GOD,

“hardened

“hardened Pharaoh’s heart(*q*),” that he moved “David to number the people (*r*),” that the L O R D put a lying spirit, in the mouths of all *Ahab’s* prophets (*s*)”, “that he turned the hearts of the Egyptians to hate his people, and to deal subtilly with his servants (*t*); that he bid Shimei curse David &c(*u*). Now, how are these texts to be explained, on any other supposition, than that of G O D’s being the author or efficient cause of sin? I answer; that as G O D’s providence over-rules, and super-intends all things; as from him we derived all our powers and faculties both natural and moral; and in him, *live, move, and have our being*; and finally, as without these powers, we could do neither good nor evil actions; hence in a figurative, and less proper sense, he is said to be the author or cause of the sinful actions and violations of men even when nothing more is intended, than that he permitted them so to do; that he upheld their lives and faculties by which they were enabled to commit sin; that he put them into such circumstances, as falling in with their corrupt tempers, made them transgress; withdrew his grace from them, left them for their former provocations, to their own obstinacy and blindness; and gave them up to satan, to be tempted by him. That this is the meaning of the above quoted scriptures, and that they do not intend that G O D makes men wicked by his own positive influence, must be evident from what is said in other parts of the *bible*. Thus, what is figuratively said to be done by G O D, 2. Samuel xxiv. 1st. is, with greater accuracy of expression, attributed to satan, 1st. Chronicles xxi. And satan stood up against *Israel*, and provoked *David* to number *Israel*. Accordingly, St. *Peter* says to *Ananias*, why hath *satan* (not why hath G O D) filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost(*w*).” But what puts this matter beyond all doubt, is the declaration of St. *James*, on this very head. “Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of G O D; for G O D cannot be tempted of evil; neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away

(*q*) *Erod.* viii. 13. (*r*) 2. *Sam.* xxiv. 1. (*s*) 2. *Cron.* xviii. 22.

(*t*) *Psa.* cv. 22. (*u*) 2 *Sam.* xvi. 11. (*w*) *Acts* v. 3.

away of his own lust, and enticed (x)". Secondly, The other article condemned by the conference is this, " it is not the duty, nay ; the unregenerate have no right to assemble with GOD's people, or to attend the means of grace." The greater part of mankind, is shocked at such a sentiment as this. Can such an opinion be possibly inferred from scripture ? Nay, does it not contradict the general tenor of the Bible ? were not the means of grace instituted for the purpose of bringing men home to CHRIST ? Does not our adorable Saviour say, " I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance(y)". " And St. Paul, that it is the duty of ministers to beseech sinners in CHRIST's stead to be reconciled to GOD(z)". What then can those men mean, who say that sinners have no right to assemble with GOD's people, to read, pray, &c ?

Is not this *laying the ax at the root of the tree* of virtue ? Is it not to encourage sin and licentiousness with a witness ? What ? shall they forbid the greater part of mankind the hearing the preached gospel ? If they thus turn men out of the synagogue, we may expect soon to hear that they have no right to breathe, and that some fanaticks will kill them, under a notion of, "doing GOD service(a)". Sinners, it is true, are to be exhorted to *believe* and *repent*. But as persons do not commonly step out of a state of unregeneracy into a state of conversion by one mighty stride, they therefore should be exhorted to wait on GOD in his appointed way, for the obtainment both of faith and repentance. They should watch at wisdoms gates, and wait at the posts of her doors(b), should cry after knowledge, and lift up their voice for understanding ; seek her as silver, and search for her, as for hid treasures, if they would understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of GOD(c)". It is reasonable to encourage the unregenerate to attend the word preached, as we are told by St. Paul, "that faith cometh by hearing (d)", and to direct them to pray, especially, as, when GOD promises to the Israelites to give them a new heart, &c. he says, " for this will I be enquired of by the house

(x) Jam. i. 13--14.

(y) Mat. ix. 13.

(z) 2. Cor. v. 20.

(a) John xvi. 2.

(b) Prov. viii. 34.

(c) Prov. ii. 3, 4, 5.

(d) Rom. x. 17.

house of Israel to do it for them (e)". Can any man, on the contrary, believe it more rational to direct them *not to ask for faith till they have received it, not to seek till they have found; not to knock till it is opened to them.* This, methinks, is absurd, contrary to the sense of mankind in general, as well as to the true meaning of scripture.---- To be sure, CHRIST did not treat sinners under conviction in this manner, "He did not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax," but encouraged the smallest beginnings of goodness, *till he sent forth judgment unto victory*, or, till conviction ended in conversion. How dreadful is a contrary sentiment, which discourages endeavours, and is promotive of vice! Attending the means of grace, if it does not terminate in conversion, has a mighty tendency to keep the conscience tender, and restrain from a multitude of sins unto which otherwise, we should be apt to rush (f).

To conclude. Brethren and Friends of this Church and Town, we heartily lament your unhappy divisions, together with the occasion of them. We sincerely wish both minister and people well. May GOD enlighten you into the knowledge of all necessary truth; and divest your minds of all undue prejudices. May those doctrines which

(.) Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

(f) Pertinent is the account that was lately transmitted to me by the Rev. Mr. MACCARTY of Worcester, and the Rev. Mr. WHITNEY of Northborough, under their hands. These gentlemen went to visit young ROSS, who was in prison, under sentence of death, for being confederate with others, in the murder of Mr. SPOONER, of Brookfield. After giving him some advice and directions what to do in his situation, and particularly urging him to the duty of prayer, he says, "I like your advice and thank you for it, but it brings to my mind something very different, which I heard not long ago from the pulpit. A young gentleman, preaching for the minister, where I used to attend publick worship, said, in the course of his sermon, that it was not a duty, or rather, it was a sin for an unregenerate man to pray. Before this I was stirred up to secret prayer at times; and thought it my duty; but hearing that sentence from the desk, caused me to lay aside secret prayer, and I have reason to think my neglect of that duty, a great cause of my falling into those sins which have brought me into this place, and situation, and for which I must soon suffer death." He said the preachers name was LITCHFIELD.

which *we* think have a malignant influence upon the temporal and spiritual interest of mankind, and which have been, in part, the occasion of your present divided state, be no more advanced, either publickly or privately, among you ; and in this case, may a union and harmony once more be restored to this formerly flourishing Town : May you walk hand in hand, through the tiresome road of life, and finally meet and rejoice together in that glorious place, where an unity of sentiment and affection constantly prevail.

A M E N

E R R A T A

Page 13. Line 29. for *Apocatype*, read *Apocalypse*.

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